

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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TAGS: UNDP, AORG

SUBJECT: MEEETING OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON
OVERHEAD COSTS

1. THE FIRST MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP WAS HELD
JANUARY 16-17. PRESIDING OFFICER WAS SAFRAZ SHAN MALIK OF
PAKISTAN WHO ABLY GUIDED DISCUSSIONS. OVERALL, WORKING
GROUP SUCCEEDED DURING THIS ORGANIZATIONAL AND PREPARATORY
SESSION IN IDENTIFYING PRINCIPLE ISSUES AND AGREEING TO
FUTURE COURSE OF ACTION AND TIMING.

2. CONSENSUS FORMED ALMOST FROM OUTSET ON NEED TO FIND
STANDARD DEFINITION OF OVERHEAD, EXAMINE ITS COMPONENT
ELEMENTS AND GENERALLY SEEK SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR COMPUTING
ACCURATE FIGURES. PRELIMINARY REPORT BY JIU (DP/WGOC/1)
WAS SEIZED UPON AS A GOOD BASIS FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION.

3. VIRTUALLY ALL INTERVENTIONS WERE FROM MEMBERS OF
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, SIERRA LEONE, INDIA AND ARGENTINA
REPRESENTATIVES DID MOST OF TALKING FOR G-77. SINCE
QUESTIONS RAISED WERE ESSENTIALLY OF A TECHNICAL NATURE,
THERE WAS NEAR UNANIMITY OF VIEWS WITH FRENCH EXPRESSING
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ONLY DISSENTING TONE. US DEL MADE TWO BRIEF INTERVENTIONS,
THE SECOND OF WHICH HELPED SET THE STAGE FOR MALIK'S
SUMMARY AND PROPOSAL FOR THE NEXT STEPS WHICH WERE
FINALLY ACCEPTED BY THE WORKING GROUP. USDEL, WORKING
WITH WEO'S ESPECIALLY FRG, HAD EARLIER INFORMALLY PROVIDED
MALIK WITH A SET OF PROPOSALS TO PROVIDE MORE FOCUS
AND DIRECTION TO THE MEETING. PROPOSALS ESSENTIALLY

CALLED FOR BUT WERE NOT MEANT TO BE LIMITED TO:

A. A STUDY BY JIU ON OVERHEADS TO INCLUDE STANDARD DEFINITION AND AGREED IDENTIFICATIONS OF COST ELEMENTS.

B. AN ANALYSIS TO EXPLAIN THE GREAT DIFFERENCES IN OVERHEADS AMONG AGENCIES.

C. IDENTIFICATION OF POSSIBLE COST REDUCTION MEASURES AGENCIES COULD TAKE.

D. ON EXAMINATION OF THE FINANCING OF THE EXCESS OF OVERHEAD EXPENDITURES TO DETERMINE IF REGULAR BUDGETS HAVE SUBSIDIZED SHORTFALLS.

E. A DETERMINATION OF A COMMON OVERHEAD FORMULA ATTRIBUTABLE BOTH TO UNDP AND TO OTHER EXTRA-BUDGETARY CONTRIBUTIONS.

4. FAO AND UNITED NATIONS SPOKESMEN BORE THE BRUNT FOR THE ORGANIZATIONS OF UN SYSTEM ALTHOUGH OTHER AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES ALSO TOOK THE FLOOR. FAO REPRESENTATIVE (WEST) INFORMED US DEL HAT SAOUMA HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO TAKE NEGATIVE POSITION ON ISSUES BEARING ON OVERHEAD. WEST ALSO STATED THAT HAD THE WORKING GROUP PROPOSED AN OVERHEAD FORMULA AT ONLY 12 PERCENT (COMPARED UNCLASSIFIED

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TO PRESENT 14 PERCENT) HE WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT IT.

2. OUTCOME OF WORKING GROUP MEETING WAS TO COMMISSION JIU TO UNDERTAKE FURTHER STUDY OF OVERHEAD USING DP/WGOC/Q AS A BASIC AND INCORPORATING ALL ELEMENTS OF US DEL PROPOSAL. PRELIMINARY NOTE FROM JIU TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO NEXT WORKING GROUP MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 1978 AFTER CONSULTING WITH AGENCIES: DRAFT FINAL NOTE TO BE PREPARED FOR JANUARY 1979 MEETING. FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE SUBMITTED TO JUNE 1979 SESSION OF GOVERNING COUNCIL.

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